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ABSTRACT

The National Advisory Council on Vocational Education conducted hearings in Washington, D. C., Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Houston, to gather information on the status of vocational education in urban areas. The report summarizes the testimony of the hearings and identifies several common urban problems: demand for vocational education training exceeds current faculty and facilities; expansion and improvement and center-city vocational education programs require increased funding; too many students are trained in fields where there are few jobs; cooperative efforts between educators and the business, industry, and labor communities need to be increased; there is a general need for more and better counseling and the development of effective placement programs; parents, teachers, and administrators continue to assume that all students should be pushed to go to academically-oriented four-year postsecondary institutions; opportunities to maximize the efficiency of the city-wide system are missed due to a reluctance to utilize the resources of the private schools; schools could do more to address the problems of sex and race discrimination in career counseling, training and placement; and there is a lack of adequate programs to provide vocational training for handicapped students. The report lists 17 recommendations for improvements. (Author/PR)

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NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

REPORT ON URBAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

CE004370

THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION was created by the Congress through the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. Its members, drawn from business, labor, education and the general public are appointed by the President. The Council is charged by law to advise the Commissioner of Education concerning the operation of vocational education programs, make recommendations concerning such programs, and make annual reports to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare for transmittal to Congress.

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The objective of this Committee was to gather information on vocational education in the five project cities, for the purpose of making recommendations to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and The Congress, regarding changes in 1975 vocational education legislation.

John H. Bustamante, Chairman
Louis L. Levine, Co-Chairman
Frank Cannizzaro

SITES AND DATES:		
	Washington, D.C.	June 28, 1973
	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	August 28, 1975
	Atlanta, Georgia	November 15, 1973
	Houston, Texas	April 18, 1974
	Los Angeles, California	February 22, 1974

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NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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JAMES A. RHODES
Chairman

CALVIN DELLEFIELD
Executive Director

December 6, 1974

The Honorable Caspar Weinberger
Secretary
Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The unemployment rate in cities is steadily climbing, due to both economic and social factors. The result is a large pool of individuals, young and old, who, upon finding no employment, are becoming increasingly disenchanted. Yet at the same time, many jobs go begging because of a lack of qualified people to fill them.

After hearing from many sources that vocational education in the cities is inferior to that of the rural and suburban areas, the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education decided to conduct hearings in five major cities to determine first-hand the validity of that statement. The cities chosen were Washington, D.C.; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Atlanta, Georgia; Los Angeles, California; and Houston, Texas.

We found that there are indeed major problems. Based upon our findings, the Council cannot overemphasize the need to improve vocational education in our major population centers if we are to provide the skill training so desperately needed.

The attached report is a summary of the testimony presented at the five hearings. Its primary focus is to delineate those problems which were found in all cities studied and which seem to be common to urban areas in general.

The Council wishes to express its appreciation to the five cities which participated in the hearings and to the many people who testified.

Sincerely,

James G Rhodes

James A. Rhodes

MARTHA BACHMAN • W. HUGHES BROCKBANK • JOHN BUSTAMANTE • FRANK CANNIZZARO • PRESTON CARUTHERS • GEORGE COOK • JO ANN CULLEN • MARVIN FELDMAN
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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE CITIES

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the past year, the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education has held hearings in five major cities to gather information on the status of vocational education in urban areas. The cities were Washington, D.C.; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Atlanta, Georgia; Los Angeles, California; and Houston, Texas.

Following is a compendium of the testomony presented at those hearings. It should be understood that since the information is based on testimonials from those individuals and organizations who chose to participate in our hearings, it is not necessarily representative of all viewpoints or opinions. At each hearing an attempt was made to invite representatives from all organizations, and in most cases all major groupings, such as educators, businessmen, labor union representatives, minority persons, etc. participated. However, in any one city, one or two of the leaders did not attend and obviously within any of the groupings there may have been large sub-groups whose opinions were not reflected.

Thus the report does not purport to provide a complete picture of urban vocational education; rather it is intended as a resource document to be used in conjunction with other resources, and any recommendations it makes are offered here only as factors to be utilized in the decision-making process. We do feel, however, that because the people who testified at the hearings represent the viewpoints of important sectors of the community, their opinions should be given serious consideration in any decisions for change. Thus we feel that this report can provide a real service.

In all five cities, testimony about innovative and exemplary programs was heard. Educators described the use of flexible scheduling, establishment of

regional occupational centers, development of career exploration programs, introduction of new curriculum material, development of placement and followup programs, and the expansion of work-study programs. There was concern in all cities about the development of a K-12 career education plan.

The Council had asked that testimony focus primarily on problem areas, however, and most of the comments reflected this request. The testimony of business, labor and community leaders showed that the public expects the schools to address broad social problems for which there are no simple solutions. One major problem in the inner city is the high unemployment rate, ranging up to 35% for black urban youth. Although many factors contribute to this high unemployment rate—including the sluggishness of the economy, the movement of businesses to the suburbs and racial discrimination—lack of adequate job skill training is also a factor.

Among the problems presented at the hearings were the following:

> The range of occupations offered by vocational education programs in the schools is too narrow.
>
> Vocational education is offered to only 14% of all high school students.
>
> Students are not adequately prepared in basic English and math.
>
> Female students are prevented from acquiring training in high-paying fields.
>
> The needs of the local employment market are not sufficiently met by occupational training programs.

Each city had its unique problems and successes. There were, however, a number of recurrent themes which ran through the testimony heard in each of the cities, which would seem to indicate that they are areas of concern common to urban areas. Each of these areas of concern is discussed in the following pages.

CONCERNS

EXPANSION: There is greater demand for vocational education training than can be met with current faculty and facilities.

The 1974 Manpower Report of the President projects a shortage by 1980 of craft workers and operatives. The number of jobs for craft workers (includes farmers; operatives in selected higher wage industries such as transportation equipment, chemical and petroleum; barbers; bartenders; and practical nurses) will increase by 16.5% between 1970 and 1980, yet the number of workers in these fields will increase by only 15.1%, leaving a gap of 1.4%. The number of jobs for operatives (includes auto mechanics; construction painters; plaster, cement and concrete finishers and roofers; workers in selected service occupations such as hospital attendants, waiters, guards, metal-working industry laborers, shipping and receiving clerks, messengers, and office helpers) will increase by 16.9%, while workers in these fields will increase only by 11.0%, leaving a gap of 5.9%.

The outlook for college graduates, however, is quite different. Projections show an increase in people seeking professional jobs by 45.3%, while an increase in the number of such jobs available will be only 39.0%. These trends—both the shortage of craft workers and operatives, and the surplus of professionals—are expected to continue through the 1980s.

They were reflected at the hearings. For example, in reporting on the unmet needs for technicians and workers in the medical field, the director of a technical school stated that three to five technicians are needed for every professional in the labor force, but that less than half that number are being trained at present.

The schools are not reaching nearly all the students who need vocational education. One school official reported that only 14% of his city's secondary school students were enrolled in vocational education. The director of a state

employment commission reported that "thousands of jobs go begging" and stated that "our only criticism of vocational education [in this area] is that there is not enough of it."

One city superintendent of schools estimated that vocational education is reaching only a third of the students who need it. The director of a community organization reported that in his experience there is a much greater demand for training than can be met by the present system. A teacher in one city sketched a vivid picture of poor, center-city students who, unable to attend the few model city vocational centers, were struggling along with obsolete equipment and less than minimal supplies.

Although the need for expansion of urban vocational education programs indicates their inadequacy, it is heartening to note that it also indicates that increased recognition is being accorded vocational education as a means of solving many of the educational and economic problems of our society.

FUNDING: Expansion and improvement of center-city vocational education programs require increased funding.

In all cities, complaints were heard about the lack of funds. While there is a need for increased funding in most rural and suburban schools, those who testified felt that cities have a special problem. Program expansion naturally calls for increased funding to provide facilities, equipment and teachers. Testimony indicated that most urban areas do not receive funding proportional to their share of the state's population. This testimony is substantiated by a National Planning Association study* which found that in forty-one states, the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) receive less federal vocational education money than would be expected on the basis of population.

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*Leonard Lecht: "Priorities for Vocational Education: Policy Alternatives for the 1970s." National Planning Association, Washington, D.C.: May 1974.

In thirty-seven states, the SMSAs recieve less state and local money than their share of the state's population would warrant.

Testimony further indicated that most city schools face higher costs for basic expenses such as teacher salaries, construction and equipment maintenance and repair than do rural and suburban districts. In addition, cities have a disproportionately high share of disadvantaged students requiring more expensive instruction. Thus many city schools are caught in a double bind: their funding per capita is less than that received by other types of school districts, while their costs per student are higher.

A state senator emphasized that administrators who have budget responsibilities need to understand that the expenses of urban vocational programs are higher than those of rural programs because they require more teachers and more equipment. He felt that some state legislators, who have never seen a piece of equipment "any more complex than a cotton gin" do not have a realistic idea of the necessity for or cost of the kind of machinery urban vocational education schools need. In his opinion, the fund allocation system requires revision in order to meet the needs of the city vocational education programs.

The chairman of a State Advisory Council on Vocational Education stressed the need for special categorical funding for disadvantaged students, stating that it is extremely difficult for local school systems to divert funds from the mainstream to serve the needs of the hard-to-reach and hard-to-teach. If a national priority of providing opportunities for vocational education to disadvantaged center-city students is to be implemented, federal funds must be earmarked for this purpose;

> RELEVANCE OF COURSES: Too many students are trained in fields where there are few jobs, and the system is too slow in updating course content and adding courses in new fields.

The personnel director of a major corporation testified that his firm must re-

cruit workers from out of state because the state's schools were not turning out people with the skills they needed. He specifically criticized the vocational education program for being too classroom-oriented and not preparing students for the work environment. The President of Women's American Occupational Rehabilitation through Training in that same city echoed the businessman's concerns and testified as to the need for closer coordination between the schools and employers. A metropolitan police chief stated that vocational education must be made more relevant to the needs of the labor market.

In one city, 8000 students are enrolled in vocational education, but 4000 of them are in consumer and homemaking.

The director of the Center for Human Resources at a university reported that there is a very serious mismatch between the skills required by the labor force and the training that is provided, especially for Mexican-Americans.

COORDINATION AMONG EMPLOYERS, UNIONS AND SCHOOLS: Cooperative efforts between educators and the business, industry and labor communities need to be increased.

Closer cooperation between business and the schools was a particularly dominant theme in all five cities. An assistant vice president of a large bank stressed the need for increased cooperation and went on to describe a special project which has brought together public and private employers in the area in a concerted effort to work with the schools.

The use by school districts of local advisory councils, one for each area of technical and vocational education, has been an effective means of insuring business and labor input into school program planning.

A businessman described a project begun in 1973 designed to bypass the bureaucratic bottleneck that prevents essential information concerning technological change from reaching vocational education classrooms. The project is called An Education-Business Exchange Program. Two phases are planned.

Phase One: Move educators into the world of work (short-term in-service training). Phase Two: Bring businessmen into the classroom so that they will have an appreciation of the problems the educator faces.

COUNSELING AND PLACEMENT: There is a general need for more and better counseling and the development of effective placement programs.

In the Council's Sixth Report, the nationwide problems of career counseling were discussed. Testimony at the hearings indicated that these problems are intensified in the cities.

A representative of the AFL-CIO complained that guidance counselors had an unrealistic idea about work and were even ignorant of the child labor laws. An official of a state department of education deplored the lack of adequate preparation of counselors and asked for a change in the entire system. Witnesses testified that counseling given Mexican-American students was particularly bad. A representative of a state employment agency reported than an effort to build a delivery system for job development and placement for students had been discussed with the board of education two years earlier, but the plan had never gotten off the ground.

In one city, the ratio of guidance counselors to students is 1 to 400. Another has one counselor to every 400-500 students. That city added 45 new career counselors last year and hopes to continue to expand the number.

Witnesses in all five cities saw a need for improved career counseling throughout the school system and some had hopes that the movement toward K-12 career education would help to address this need.

Placement services were also seen as essential. One city is moving in this direction with a full-time placement coordinator in each of twelve comprehensive high schools.

Insofar as improving vocational education in the cities is seen as part of a

larger effort to improve the position of disadvantaged persons in the economy, it must be tied in with an adequate career guidance program and a job placement system.

> IMAGE: Although the image of vocational education is improving, many parents, academic teachers, and administrators continue to assume that all students should be pushed to go to academically-oriented four-year postsecondary institutions.

A representative of a model cities program stated that vocational education is still seen as a "dumping ground." A local black political leader said that because discriminatory practices of the past made college inaccessible to most blacks, a premium came to be placed on a college education in the black community, while loss of status is associated with training. Other witnesses elaborated on the stigma attached to vocational education in the schools. One reported hearing a teacher threaten a student by saying, "If you don't shape up, I'll send you to the vocational program."

Steps are being taken to improve the image of vocational education. A member of a State Advisory Council on Vocational Education reported that they were sponsoring a program to do this and there was testimony to indicate that the situation is indeed improving but still has a long way to go.

> PRIVATE SCHOOLS: Opportunities to maximize the efficiency of the city-wide system are missed due to a reluctance to utilize the resources of the private schools.

A member of a State Advisory Council stated that not enough advantage has been taken of the private sector in vocational education. A representative of private schools asked for full parity for students who choose private schools. Current regulations covering the use of Basic Opportunity Grants penalize private schools with short, efficient courses.

A private school administrator reported that private schools are often ahead

of public schools in responding to current needs. They give shorter courses, requiring less time for achievement of equivalent levels of competence, and allow students to work at the same time they are attending school.

The president of an association of private schools declared that private schools are not being used to provide service, despite recent laws and pressures applied by advisory councils to do so.

A representative of the Urban League agreed that private schools should be utilized more, but cautioned that strict accreditation and licensing standards would be necessary.

DISCRIMINATION: Schools could do more to address the problems of sex and race discrimination in career counseling, training and placement.

A director of Service, Employment and Redevelopment—Manpower Development Training Act reported that the dropout rate for Mexican Americans exceeds 80% in his city. Blacks and Mexican-Americans, he claimed are channeled into wood and metal shops simply to fill gaps created by poorly planned scheduling. He said vocational education in center-city schools is inferior to that in wealthier areas, and counseling techniques used with minorities are not sufficiently geared to the needs of these students.

A representative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People stated that 80% of black students in his city came out of the school system not equipped at all to be absorbed into the job market.

The personnel director of a large business testified that the vocational education system is not training enough minority group students and women, whom his company needs in order to comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.

Several women's groups charged the school system with sex discrimination. In one of the cities vocational shools had been segregated by sex, with female

students excluded from training in most higher paid occupations, until an end was put to this practice in September of 1973.

Public witnesses in all five cities urged schools in general and vocational education departments in particular to make stronger efforts to equalize opportunities for minority groups and women.

NEEDS OF HANDICAPPED STUDENTS: There is a lack of adequate programs to provide vocational training for handicapped students.

A representative of a Home for Crippled Children reported that handicapped students are often excluded from vocational education programs because counselors and teachers do not want them. In the area of career exploration, little is done to disseminate information to the handicapped. He also reported that there seems to be competition rather than cooperation between the regular vocational education program and vocational rehabilitation.

Although short of funds, there is a special vocational program for educable mentally retarded students in that city called Project Liaison.

* * *

The hearings reflected a mixture of successes and problem areas in urban vocational education programs. Most of the problems were stated in a spirit of constructive criticism and it was generally felt that the vocational education system as developed by Congress is adequate, although there are areas that need further attention. It was to these areas that most of the individuals addressed themselves and the recommendations that follow for the federal, state and local levels reflect this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations derive not only from the urban hearings but also from the reports of the State Advisory Councils.

FEDERAL

1. That Congress enact a special program of crash funding of vocational education to urban areas without reducing funds going to rural and suburban communities.

2. That the Office of Education, in fulfilling its legal obligation to monitor the State Plans and the expenditure of federal vocational education funds, insist that not only the provisions but also the intent of the law regarding set-asides for the disadvantaged and handicapped be met.

3. That the National Center for Education Statistics gather data on vocational education expenditures which would allow for an accurate comparison of per student costs and per student funding among urban, suburban and rural areas. Data should be made available specifically on the center cities, not just on the SMSAs.

4. That the National Center for Education Statistics should gather statistics on vocational education enrollments by sex and race to allow analysis of possible patterns of discrimination.

STATE

5. That State Departments of Vocational Education recognize that cities have needs different from other areas and that these needs must be given special consideration.

6. That states revise their allocation formulas to more adequately reflect needs in urban centers.

7. That the state planning mechanism be adjusted to more accurately reflect labor market needs, particularly in training city students.

8. That state legislation allow for the use of private schools to provide vocational education when that is the most efficient utilization of public funds.

9. That vocational education be made available to all city students who need it.

10. That State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education assist the State Board of Education in developing a master plan for meeting the special needs of urban vocational education.

LOCAL

11. That courses in city vocational education programs be continually updated and made relevant to the real job market.

12. That city schools establish meaningful liaison with business, industry, and labor communities locally, including the establishment of local advisory councils.

13. That all vestiges of discrimination based on race, sex and national origin be eliminated from vocational courses and career guidance, counseling, and placement.

14. That city schools make a policy commitment to provide job placement and followup counseling for students and—whether by the school or by cooperating agencies—implement meaningful followup procedures to allow the schools to profit from the experiences of graduates and school leavers.

15. That schools make a concerted effort to provide handicapped students with needed skill training.

16. That guidance and counseling programs be improved, particularly at the elementary level and for minority students.

17. That support for youth organizations be increased.

REPORTS AVAILABLE FROM THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 (PL 90-576) First Report
July 15, 1969
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Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 (PL 90-576) Second Report
November 15, 1969
[Index No. 2]

Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 (PL 90-576) Third Report
July 10, 1970
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Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 (PL 90-576) Fourth Report
January 16, 1971
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Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 (PL90-576) Fifth Report
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Counseling and Guidance: A Call for Change
June 1, 1972
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Vocational Student Organizations
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A National Policy on Career Education
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Employment Problems of the Vietnam Veterans
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PROCEEDINGS OF JOINT MEETINGS WITH THE STATE ADVISORY COUNCILS ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ARE ALSO AVAILABLE. PLEASE REQUEST BY DATE.

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